/20 cont./

233 182 318 However, if these last paragraphs have brought out the influence that the geographical and biological environment has had on the Sarakatsani, it is necessary also to mention the influence which their activity as herders has on the landscape itself.

233 318 For an observer it is easy to identify the area occupied by our herders. In those regions the ground is close-cropped. Seen from a sufficient distance it seems dotted with shrubs between which a sparse vegetation gives the impression of a green or yellowish carpet. In the valleys the shrubs are absent. But the carpet is always there, testifying to the presence of the flocks. Nature carries the [161] imprint of the passage of Sarakatsani and this on a very considerable scale in view of their number (according to approximate reckonings they represent a population of 90,000 to /21/ 110,000) and the number of their livestock which represents the core of sheep herding in Greece.

The effects of this imprint on the climate, the temperature and the water courses are evident.

If the life of the Sarakatsani is closely dependent on nature, the latter, in turn, is transformed by them in a manner which is just as significant.

Geographically speaking, these phenomena are noted around the large mountain ranges of the country, whether one looks at Pindus and its ramifications (Agrapha, Orthrys, Vardoussia, Parnassus), the Olympus chain including the Chassia, Vermion, Kaimaktsalan, or the Rodhopi chain including Phalakron, etc.

361 The Sarakatsani establish themselves on the slopes as well as in the valleys. The country they prefer is continintal Greece.

There are none on the islands or in the Peloponnesus. However, [174] we have reason to believe that there used to be some Sarakatsani groups in the northern Peloponnesus. But from all evidence, they were rapidly assimilated and have become peasants.

Thus their geographical habitat is confined to the areas we have